Our Students, Our Future

An Educational Framework

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This document, *"Our Students, Our Future: An Educational Framework"* expands on the vision of schooling articulated in *"Education in the N.W.T."*, by providing a framework to guide all educational activities within our school system.

The development of Divisional Boards of Education provides increased opportunities for meaningful participation by parents and other community members in the schooling of their children . Divisional Boards enable parents to become more involved in making decisions about education and to truly become partners in the educational process. Schooling which incorporates and reflects the child's cultural identity and builds on the child's previous experiences ensures a solid foundation for learning. More control of education at the local level facilitates the development of this culture-based schooling.

This framework endorses a wholistic approach to learning - one which is balanced and acknowledges the importance of addressing all student needs - physical, social, emotional and spiritual, as well as intellectual; and one which is integrated and acknowledges that learning does not occur in isolation. It supports the importance of the learning process - a process which provides students with the skills to enable them to function effectively as confident, responsible members of this constantly changing society.

The future of the N.W.T. depends on its children. By working together, we can ensure that our children are well prepared for that future.

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Introduction

Education is a dynamic process, involving individuals, groups and the society in which they live. It is a process which is shaped by the past, and, at the same time, one which must be refined continuously to support a vision for the future.

The education process in the Northwest Territories should reflect the unique nature of its peoples' past — their traditions, history and values; and, in the evolution of the N.W.T. towards self-determination, the process should be molded to provide an appropriate response in preparing its children and young people for the future.

Environment and Culture of the Learner

The area now known as the Northwest Territories has been inhabited by ancestors of the Dene and Inuit for thousands of years. Today people of many other cultures also live here. The early aboriginal inhabitants were hunters who established distinctive cultures and lifestyles; they lived in balance with their natural surroundings, created an orderly relationship with the world around them and developed an intimate relationship with the land.

Children were educated by the people closest to them. Various family members accepted responsibility for different aspects of children's education. Children and young people learned the skills necessary for the world in which they lived by observing adults and by sharing directly in adult activities. Elders, parents and others taught the values and traditions of the group — often through stories and myths passed orally from generation to generation. The knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which they learned provided a clear sense of identity, a unique view of the world they inhabited and a strong sense of their cultural identity.

Cultural groups existed largely in isolation from each other. The close relationships and dependency on other members of the same culture served to reinforce a strong cultural identity within each group. Interaction among cultural groups was with people whose lifestyles and worldviews were very similar.

Only 500 years ago, the first Europeans from the 'old world' arrived in North America. This marked the beginning of contact between North American aboriginal people and Euro-Canadians. In the N.W.T., contact has been much more recent than that. These newcomers brought different values, philosophies and lifestyles, which impacted significantly not only on the lifestyles of aboriginal people, but also on their worldview and sense of being. This contact changed, and continues to change, the whole cultural dynamics of the Northwest Territories.

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Until the mid 1900s, aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories continued to live in camps, pursuing traditional lifestyles and engaging mainly in hunting and trapping activities. They were largely self-sufficient. Very few attended school or worked at the small outposts. Any contact was usually for the purposes of trading, or with explorers or missionaries who ventured north. In the 1950s, contact among cultural groups with vastly different worldviews increased.

For social, political and economic reasons, people were encouraged to move from camps into permanent settlements. Formal education, which was seen partly as a way of preparing northerners for possible jobs, was introduced. Parents, who had never had any formal schooling themselves, were encouraged to send their children to school. As well, more Euro-Canadians were attracted to the N.W.T. by the promise of increased development.

For aboriginal people, traditional roots have been weakened by contact with other cultures and new ones have not yet been fully established. Today, young people often find themselves caught between the 'old ways' and the demands of modern society. Their connections with their past and, hence, their sense of identity, are sometimes tenuous; they are often separated from both worldviews.

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For their part, the Euro-Canadians who have settled here have brought and maintained their own unique cultures. The context in which they now find themselves forces them to try to reconcile their own needs and desires with the strong cultural past and future aspirations of aboriginal people. These differing, and sometimes conflicting, needs have created a dilemma for the education system for many years.

Today, the N.W.T. embraces a broad diversity of cultures — aboriginal and non-aboriginal — evolving to meet the demands of modern society. Each culture is at a different stage of evolution; some are struggling for survival and renewal; others are striving to be maintained; all have a desire to be strengthened. The unique language legislation of the N.W.T., giving aboriginal languages, English and

French official status will contribute to ensuring the survival of these languages, and, in turn the cultures, since the values and worldview of each culture are embedded in its language. The need to address this cultural and linguistic diversity will continue to pose considerable challenges for schooling in the N.W.T. At the same time, however, exposure to a number of different cultures provides all students with a unique opportunity to discover, understand and appreciate other cultures; in particular, the history and culture of the aboriginal peoples of the N.W.T.

As they move towards the next century residents of the N.W.T. must confront other formidable challenges:

- high drop-out rates, and low adult literacy rates;
- high unemployment, coupled with poor or inadequate housing; and,
- high incidences of health and other social problems with relatively few professional supports.

Other factors, too, will continue to impact on people's lives in the N.W.T., including rapid technological advances in transportation and communications, the importance of environmental issues, the ever-increasing demand for non-renewable resources and the move towards a global economy. All of these issues impact on schooling as well.

In response to these challenges, the people of the N.W.T. have called for, and are gaining, increased control over their own economic and political future. Economic self-determination will depend largely on young people having the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to make life choices. Young people need the skills to enable them to experience success and develop positive self-esteem, whether as participants in the wage economy, in a traditional lifestyle or a combination of both.

The political future of the N.W.T. depends on the resolution of such key factors as land claims. Today's young people need to be prepared to accept the new accompanying responsibilities.

These various challenges, linguistic and cultural, social, economic and political all need to be considered

"In the present educational system in the NWT, there is a need to implement courses of the aboriginal peoples' cultural beliefs and values; including history and present struggles, political, economical, cultural and social. The cultural values and struggles are relevant to the young people to being more understanding and respectful of the cultures which will bring the young people together for a good and a united future for all the people of the Northwest Territories."
(Territorial Youth Forum '85)

when formulating the goals for schooling in the N.W.T. Schooling has a vital role to play in responding to these challenges, by developing a learning process which meets the needs of the learners.

Decisions about education, such as the exact role of the school and the way it carries out that role, necessitate firstly an understanding of:

*** the learners**

- What is their culture?
- What languages do they understand?
- What are their strengths and needs?
- What interests do they have?
- What values do they espouse?
- What attitudes do they hold?
- How do they learn?

*** and their future**

- What will the world be like in which they will live as adults?
- What knowledge, skills and attitudes will they need in order to function as responsible citizens in that world?

Educational decisions also require an understanding of how all young people grow and develop and of the factors which affect such development.

Growth and Development

Children's environment and culture shape their values, determine their view of the world and provide their early experiences. For example, young people who are raised in a land-based culture will view animals as an important source of food, and the hunt as a means of supplying that food; they learn specific values, knowledge and skills related to the animals; their experiences are practical, such as actually going on the hunt. Young people from a culture based on a wage economy may know little about hunting for food and will view animals and food sources quite differently. Environment (past, present and future) and culture direct children's growth and development by providing the context for prior learning and determining the needs — physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual — specific to the learners in that environment and culture.

As well, all students, like *all* human beings, share some common needs:

- to be cared for physically, with adequate food, shelter, clothing and sleep;
- to feel safe and secure in a stable, protective environment;
- to be accepted and loved by people who care for them and make them feel special;
- to experience success through activities in which they feel competent, and are recognized for their achievements;
- to make sense of their world with opportunities to express what they have learned about it;
- to experience self-fulfillment through activities which have value for them and the society in which they live.

All of these needs together, common needs and the needs arising from the specific environment and culture, determine the starting point for schools. Since the environments and cultures of students differ, however, even within the same community, schools have to consider

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all students as individuals in terms of their growth and development.

In order for schooling to be relevant for students, it should recognize who the learners are and build on the experiences and strengths which they bring with them; it should understand all of their needs, including those which will be required for the world in which they will live as adults. Foremost, however, it should reflect their worldview thus enabling them to make connections between home and school. Schooling, therefore, should incorporate and be shaped by the culture of individual communities, that is, it should be culture-based.

Culture-based schooling implies that decisions about educational activities at all levels are directed and driven by individuals and groups who represent the cultures of the N.W.T. Culture-based schooling recognizes the value of students' cultures and creates pride in them. Thus, it provides not only more meaningful school experiences for students, but also enhances their self-esteem and provides them with greater opportunities for success.

Community Ownership and Partnerships

The establishment and maintenance of culture-based schooling is dependent upon a strong sense of community ownership. Where people feel that the school belongs to them, they are more comfortable playing an active role in their children's schooling by providing direction and by contributing to the implementation of that direction. They are real partners in the education process and view that role both as a right and a responsibility. At the same time, the school understands and accepts the need to have the community's values, vision and culture reflected in meaningful ways in all its activities. Thus the school in a community is seen as the community's school.

Culture-based schooling requires on-going input from a broad range of people, especially those with personal commitment to the students in any given community. Many people have a shared interest in and can contribute important information about the students who attend a school.

Ideally, **parents** are key players in formulating the vision of the future for their children within the overall society. In the early days of formal schooling in the N.W.T., when students moved away from their families to attend mission schools, parents were excluded from, and so had little control over, their children's education. Some parents who have not been part of a formal education process, or who were educated away from their families, do not always understand how important it is for them to become involved in their children's schooling now, what their role is or how to become involved.

In other cultures, too, parents were excluded from their children's schooling in the past. Only in recent years has the importance of parental involvement been recognized. Parents are, however, the best advocates for their own children and are the people most knowledgeable about the students' non-school behaviours. Family involvement,

which increases the information available on which to make educational decisions, can enhance student success in school.

Other community members, in particular other close family members and elders, can provide valuable insights into the environment and culture from which students come, including what they should learn and how they learn best. Elders have a wealth of knowledge about their culture, shared by few others. All local members of the school staff, such as N.W.T.-born teachers, school-community counsellors and support staff, can contribute to ensuring that the school reflects not only the local cultures, but also those of the N.W.T. as a whole.

As professionals, **educators** have always taken seriously the goal of assisting students to develop to their fullest potential. They continuously strive to make the educational activities in their classrooms and schools relevant and appropriate for their students. They have direct contact with students in providing quality schooling. Educators can contribute information about child development, effective learning processes and knowledge of specific subject matter from their professional perspective. They also have the best information about students' school behaviours.

Learners have self-knowledge which enables them to make important decisions about their own education; they often know their own strengths and weaknesses; they may be able to articulate their individual needs; and they can identify their particular interests and aspirations. Learners who are involved as partners in directing their learning in school are more motivated to learn and experience more success.

All partners have an active role to play in, and should have meaningful input into, the education process. Each partner needs to be committed to providing and responding to opportunities for interaction and involvement to complement the roles of other partners. The challenge for individual schools is to determine how these partnerships will be forged in response to the uniqueness of the community in which a school is located.

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Various levels of the educational system (the Local Education Authority, the Regional Education Authority and the Department of Education) have much to contribute to facilitate the development of partnerships, through the processes which they use to establish direction. The curriculum development process, Divisional Boards, the Curriculum Advisory Committee, Subject Advisory Committees, Teaching and Learning Centres and the School Trustees' Association are examples of vehicles which create partnerships.

The establishment of partnerships and a strong sense of community ownership has a positive impact on all activities which occur within the school. Where strong partnerships and community ownership are established, schooling can reflect what is relevant and appropriate for students. It can tailor the learning process to better meet student needs; it can ensure support services for students are available and appropriate; and, it can create an environment that is conducive to learning. Together, the educational partners can offer relevant culture-based schooling which, although it may differ from community to community because of the diverse cultural and socio-economic make-up of the N.W.T., provides for effective schooling.

The Learning Process

Students themselves are the most significant of all the partners and their needs should be the key determinants of the learning process. Experiences within the family and community prior to attending school determine what they bring with them. Schools should build on those experiences by bringing the world of the learner into the school and extending learning beyond the school walls. For each student, those experiences, strengths and needs may be quite different, even though the lifestyle and culture within the community may be common to all or many families. Schooling should recognize and respond to students as individuals, while remaining cognizant of the importance of the family, community and larger society. Responding to students as individuals requires **student-centred learning**, that is, learning which is shaped by the needs of the learner.

Schooling should respond to *all* the needs of learners — physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual — in order to facilitate their wholistic growth and development. It is important to provide students with a **balance** of learning experiences which addresses all human needs, not only through the instructional program, but also through support services provided by or in the school and through the school environment. The traditional focus of schooling on intellectual development has had limited success, particularly when learners have other needs that are not met; a balanced focus is essential for students to learn effectively and experience success.

We feel that learning is a continuous process that is not restricted to school walls, specific age groups, or academic institutional packaging.
(Brief, Baffin Region Adult Educators)

Learning within the real world occurs in context and rarely in isolation. Similarly, in schools, an effective learning process goes beyond rote learning or the practice of skills in isolation and focuses on **integrated** learning. Knowledge, skills and attitudes are taught and learned best when students are engaged in wholistic learning situations, where networks of key concepts and objectives, drawn from a number of subject areas, become integrated around a central, relevant topic. The various subjects interact, and growth in one area promotes and reinforces growth in another.

Students today must be able to handle unfamiliar situations in this rapidly changing world, with ease. It is difficult to predict what knowledge may be necessary in the future, therefore students need to understand and apply processes which enable them to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, as needed. In other words, they need to learn *how* to learn. Using a **process-oriented** approach, schooling can engage students in activities which require them to think, communicate, organize, interact, make decisions and solve problems. In this way, students take control of their own learning and can apply a variety of learning processes throughout their lives.

Learning is a social phenomenon; people of all ages learn from and with each other. Schooling can maximize learning opportunities by encouraging students to work together in pairs, in groups or as a class; or by implementing programs such as peer tutoring or mentorships. **Interactive** learning reinforces important processes, such as communicating and problem solving. As well, it encourages students to function as co-operating, rather than competing, members of social groups and enables them to take more responsibility for their own learning.

During the learning process, it is important to ascertain continuously the extent to which students are benefitting from their schooling experiences. Assessment, therefore, should be an integral part of the process.

Since one of the major aims of assessment is to ensure the development of each student, effective assessment forms a positive component of the learning process and focuses on all five domains of student growth. It supports and encourages learning and provides learners with immediate meaningful feedback to assist in on-going planning and to set future direction for programs. It looks not only at what has been learned, but also at individual growth and the process through which learning and growth take place; it focuses on what students *can* do, thus enhancing student self-esteem.

As with other aspects of education, effective evaluation promotes and benefits from the development of

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partnerships. It incorporates information from as many sources as possible, in particular, from students themselves and their parents. At the same time, it provides opportunities to communicate information about student growth to students and parents in meaningful and appropriate ways.

An effective learning process enables students to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to cope with the challenges which they face now and in the years ahead.

The Educated Person

Schools share responsibility for preparing students for the future. In order to make schooling effective, it is important to determine the knowledge, skills and attitudes which students will require.

In earlier times, when change was less rapid, it was possible to predict with reasonable accuracy the knowledge, skills and attitudes that adults would need. In the latter part of the twentieth century, however, change is occuring at an unprecedented rate. The knowledge explosion, coupled with world-wide social, economic and political changes make it impossible to predict exactly what knowledge future generations will require in order to function effectively in their world. Unquestionably, students will have to emerge from the school system much more flexible and more adaptable than their predecessors to be able to respond confidently and responsibly in such an environment.

As adults living in the twenty-first century, they will have to be thoughtful, self-directed problem solvers, who not only participate in, but also direct, their own learning. They will require a positive self-esteem and the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will enable them to make responsible, informed decisions and to respond with confidence in new situations. They will have to be able to gain knowledge, when the need arises, through intuition, discovery, analysis, synthesis and evaluation and will have to communicate effectively what they have learned. As productive, contributing members of a culturally diverse society, such as the N.W.T. and Canada, they will be required to work individually and co-operatively to enhance that society. Through all of this, they will be guided by their own value and belief systems, formulated from significant people and experiences in their environment.

The demands placed on adults by continuously changing situations will make it vital for them to continue the learning process throughout their lives. To be motivated to do this, they will have to derive personal satisfaction from learning; thus learning at school has to be interesting, enjoyable, relevant and appropriate.

Goals of Schooling

Schools, in partnership with families and communities, are key players in helping young people develop the characteristics which they will need to fulfil their roles as adults in the twenty-first century. Schooling has always been shaped and guided by the society that establishes it; in the N.W.T., this means that schooling should respond not only to the goals of the larger society, but also to the particular goals of N.W.T. communities and their residents. These goals will be interpreted and implemented differently, depending on the specific environment and culture.

Knowledge and understanding of the learners' environment and culture, and of human development, enables the experiences, strengths, needs and interests of the learners to be identified; knowledge and understanding of how learning occurs enables the most effective learning processes to be determined and applied; and knowledge and understanding of the world of the future enables the characteristics of educated people who will live in that world to be articulated. Combined, these determine the goals of schooling. Since growth in each of the five domains is essential for wholistic personal development, the goals of schooling reflect knowledge, skills and attitudes in each domain:

Physical goal: To assist in the development of students who understand, actively seek and value their own well-being and that of their fellow citizens.

Emotional goal: To assist in the development of students who have positive self-esteem, based on a strong sense of their own identity and values; who understand and deal with their feelings; and who face challenges with confidence.

Social goal: To assist in the development of students who interact positively with others, regardless of differences; and who understand, exercise and value social rights and responsibilities.

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Intellectual goal: To assist in the development of students who understand and apply thinking and problem solving skills to their everyday lives; who communicate effectively from a broad knowledge base; and who have a desire to be involved in lifelong learning.

Spiritual goal: To assist in the development of students who seek to understand and express their relationships with those aspects of their lives, from which beliefs, values and worldviews emanate.

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Implications

The achievement of these goals will ensure that the N.W.T. has adults with the necessary characteristics to direct, support and enhance its development in the future. Working towards their attainment, has many implications for *all* educational activities and practices:

- for the instructional program offered by the school, that is, the curriculum and program;
- for the support services offered by or through the school; and
- for the school environment.

These, in turn, have implications for matters such as staffing and staff development, for the priorities which are established and for the kinds of policies which are formulated. There are implications too for the roles and responsibilities of the various partners in education:

- students;
- parents and other community members;
- principals and school staffs (teaching and non-teaching, professional and para-professional);
- members of local education authorities;
- members and staff of Boards/Divisional Boards; and
- staff in the Department of Education.

The attainment of these goals is dependent on:

1. Schooling that provides a secure, nurturing environment that reflects the cultures of the community, enhances self-esteem and promotes learning.

Just as employees' levels of productivity and efficiency are influenced by their work environment, the same is true for students. An inviting, safe environment which reflects the values, world views and languages of the community's cultures contributes to the well-being of both students and staff, and promotes a sense of community ownership of the school. The physical arrangement in the classroom, for

example student groupings, can foster the development of important social skills, such as interaction and collaboration. The social and emotional environment can foster the development of positive relationships among students, staff, and other partners. Schools can be models of concerned and caring communities, where mutual support for learning is evident and where everyone is committed to working towards common goals.

Such an environment supports and promotes the development of positive self-esteem, a critical factor in facilitating learning. People with positive self-esteem have a strong sense of identity, know who they are and what their roots are. They feel proud of who they are. Feelings of success also enhance self-esteem. Students need opportunities to experience success — to ensure that their experiences are valued and validated. They have to be aware of the things which they *can* do, and have all of their efforts and achievements recognized. Schools which demonstrate a belief that all students are capable of learning and can take responsibility for their own learning assist students to set their own goals and provide a variety of options and supports to enable them to achieve those goals.

A positive learning environment is crucial to student learning. This will be reflected in school policy, in the variety and types of educational programs which Boards and schools offer students, in the supports provided and in assessment policies and practices.

Growth in learning occurs in an atmosphere in which students are encouraged to take risks, to try out new ideas without fear of failure or adverse criticism and where mistakes are seen as an inevitable and valuable part of the learning process. Schools can do this best by providing students with an environment which affords them sufficient time and where they receive encouragement to explore relationships between new knowledge and existing understandings. Students also need to have and to participate in determining well-defined, well-communicated, realistic expectations; school and community personnel can then support them in meeting or redefining these expectations, as necessary.

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2. Schooling that promotes the participation of educational staff, students, families and the community in making decisions about learning.

All schools need a vision for their students — a sense of what is important and valuable for the learners — which will provide direction for all educational activity. The co-operative development of that vision, by students, parents, staff and other community members results in a school that is truly reflective of the whole community and recognizes the legitimate interest families and communities have in their children. Decisions related to learning at an individual, classroom, school, regional or Territorial level incorporate meaningful input from and feedback to all partners in education.

Schools with a community vision reach out to the community and become part of the community by providing many opportunities to involve family and community members in school activities. This may mean recognizing and working at breaking down barriers which hinder meaningful involvement. Where historical factors may have impacted negatively on parental involvement, it is

important for educators to make a concerted effort to break down barriers by establishing an inviting school climate and by taking schooling beyond the walls of the school, thus enabling and encouraging meaningful involvement of parents and other community members as part of the schooling process.

This means the establishment of effective two-way communication, where community members and school staff consult readily and listen to each other and where cultural differences are valued and respected; information about students is readily exchanged, and all have defined roles in the education of the students in that community. In the beginning, it may mean developing strategies to encourage parents to come into the school, but later it means providing opportunities for involvement in activities such as joint goal setting and informed decision-making. It means a strong voice for parents and others in directing the schooling process.

At the same time, families and community members can demonstrate a willingness and a desire to become involved in their children's schooling. Involved, supportive parents accept responsibility for preparing their children for school, and discuss school with their children. As well, they accept responsibility for finding out more about school and participating in shaping schooling in their community.

Students who are provided with opportunities and assistance to take control of their own learning will become partners in their own education. They will have input into what they will learn and how, and will set their own goals and evaluate their growth. In that way, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, to become the self-directed problem-solvers they will need to be as adults.

Through mutual efforts to involve and become involved, learning is a truly shared responsibility.

3. Schooling that promotes the balanced growth of students.

The wholistic development of students depends on the provision of a balance of experiences within the school. Schooling provides opportunities for growth in each domain — physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual. Instruction deals with the development of skills and attitudes, as well as knowledge. However, balanced development occurs through or is supported by *all* experiences in a school, not just through instruction. For example, a safe environment contributes to the physical well-being of students, while the modelling of positive relationships by adults contributes to social and emotional well-being. The provision of support services to prevent problems which may interfere with learning, or to intervene where problems already exist, contributes to emotional well-being initially, and, subsequently, to intellectual development. Music, art, drama, land experiences and associations with elders are examples of activities that can contribute to spiritual development.

Traditionally schools focussed primarily on the intellectual domain; today's society requires that schools take a more wholistic approach, focussing on all the dimensions of the child.

4. Schooling that recognizes and responds appropriately to student diversity.

Students bring to school vastly differing experiences, strengths, needs and interests based on their environments and cultures. By recognizing these and using them as the starting point for educational activities for students, schooling builds on what students already know and value, thus enabling them to link new learning with prior learning. Through the partnerships which schools establish, they can determine learner needs more accurately and respond to them more appropriately. The learning process will be driven by the needs of the learner.

Student learning increases when it is meaningful, relevant and useful to the learner. For example, Kindergarten

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students who visit a community health centre will have a more meaningful learning experience than those who learn about it in the classroom. Students who participate in role playing activities such as job interviews will feel much more confident when confronted with the real situation. When schooling is meaningful in terms of their own values, students' world views are accepted and education becomes more relevant for them.

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All educational activities need to be developmentally appropriate for the needs of the learners. For schools, this means providing a rich variety of materials, concrete to abstract, appropriate to the students' development. It also means that materials and approaches change as students mature. Since learning does not take place in isolation or discontinuously, schools which help students connect learning experiences — across grades and subjects and from home and community to the school — will support and reinforce learning for them as individuals.

Within each classroom, students will have a broad range of needs. To facilitate their learning, there will be times when students are working alone; at other times, they will be working co-operatively in groups; and there will

be times when the whole class is working together. Whatever they are learning, however, will be addressing an identified need for them.

Not all students have the same needs, nor do they make the same life choices upon leaving school. All students should, however, have equal access to educational opportunities. Schools which recognize this offer a range of strategies and programs at the classroom level to meet individual student needs.

5. Schooling that teaches students how to learn.

The nature of today's world demands critical analysis of existing knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as the skills to identify and acquire new learning. Students will become lifelong learners when they themselves know how to learn and are motivated to do so. Schooling which enables students to take control of their own learning focuses on the processes which facilitate learning, rather than on the acquisition of large volumes of knowledge.

6. Schooling that extends and enriches students' understanding and use of communication.

Communication is indispensable in learning. Students learn as they interact with people and materials in trying to make sense of their world. They do this through listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and/or representing.

Meaningful and natural communication experiences do not occur divorced from content. Therefore, schooling which provides relevant, purposeful and meaningful experiences will use concepts from various subjects as the basis for communication opportunities. In this manner, communication becomes the tool which orders thinking and makes ideas concrete. At the same time, when encountering new experiences, students expand and enrich their communication. Such an interactive process facilitates simultaneous growth in both communication and thought; and, regardless of the language of communication, does so in direct relation to the quality of the interaction.

Implementation

This framework articulates a vision for schooling in the Northwest Territories. The process required to implement the framework will vary depending on the current beliefs and practices of individual jurisdictions and schools. In some communities, schooling already incorporates the beliefs underlying this framework into educational activities. In others, a longer time-frame will be required to understand and implement the changes associated with this vision.

The successful implementation of these beliefs and the achievement of the goals of schooling can result in students acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to be responsible, confident members of this rapidly changing, diverse society. It also will ensure that the N.W.T. will have adults who can provide leadership and direction for the future.

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